



## Acquisition Directorate

# UNMANNED AERIAL SYSTEMS

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The Coast Guard is exploring the use of Unmanned Aerial Systems (UASs) to augment the service's cutter- and land-based aviation capabilities. A UAS consists of an aircraft, its mission payloads and ground support equipment (e.g., transporters, storage containers, launchers and control stations).

UASs, with their ability to provide persistent maritime surveillance in challenging operational environments, have the potential to serve as a cost-effective means to employ more surveillance capability when and where it is most needed. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has approved a Coast Guard UAS strategy to acquire both low-altitude, cutter-based, tactical UASs and mid-altitude, land-based, long-range UASs. The Coast Guard UAS project is in the pre-acquisition phase. Coast Guard UAS procurements will emphasize commonality with existing DHS and Department of Defense programs while ensuring the projects are technologically and production mature.

A cutter-based UAS would augment surveillance efforts currently provided via embarked helicopters. A cutter-based UAS solution would provide additional maritime surveillance and detection capacity. The Coast Guard R&D Center completed its congressionally directed study to determine the most effective UAS to operate off the National Security Cutter (NSC). The study determined that a cutter-based UAS with appropriate sensors (radar and electro-optical/infrared) would significantly enhance NSC operational effectiveness.

A land-based UAS would leverage maritime sensors and communications with increased persistence to augment surveillance efforts currently provided via various maritime patrol aircraft. The Coast Guard will pursue a strategy in which an existing land-based UAS will conduct maritime missions in various environments. The Coast Guard is working with U.S. Customs and Border Protection in its use of a maritime variant of the Predator UAS (Guardian) along the southeastern U.S. maritime operating area.



**U.S. Navy Fire Scout UAS**



**U.S. Customs and Border Protection  
"Guardian" Predator UAS**

Mission execution begins **here.**